

FORGIVENESS

A shirttail relative on
Aunt Stacey's side, I never knew
quite how that was
 Ellsworth put on a rusty suit
 and black string tie every
 Sunday morning
 and sat with a big Bible on his
 scrawny knees
 reading aloud
 and preaching sermons to himself
Only one unpardonable sin in
 these United States
 he figured out

 and that's being dirt poor
 folks will forgive anything else
 everything but that

JOHN'S FATHER

Mr. Conley wears plaid shirts
winter or summer
and chews tobacco, very neatly
 Getting on in years
Says, I've got cataracts
but I read real good
and I like to play them old records
by the Carter family
 No, I don't mean that June bug girl,
 I'm talkin' about her mother,
 that kind of music and singin'
 really helps me pass the time